Philosophy of the Human Person (Phil 1311)

Wednesday evenings from 5:30 to 8:15 PM
Alief Early College High School, room number 116
Mr. Brandon White
Adjunct Instructor
whitebk@stthom.edu

Office hours:
To be determined

Required Materials:

The following texts must be purchased by the student:
The other readings assigned in the syllabus will be made available to the student by the instructor.

Attendance/Participation:
Students are expected to be present at every class. Responsibility for material covered in a missed class rests solely with the student.

Cell phones and Computers:
Cellular phones must be turned off for the duration of the class period. Notes, if the student wishes, may be taken by means of a laptop. The laptop may not be used for any non-academic purpose for the duration of the class period. The instructor reserves the right to ask the student to leave the remainder of the class period for a violation of this policy (as well as for any [other] disruption of class).

Course Description:
The subject of the course is rational anthropology, i.e., the philosophical analysis of what it is to be a human being. The course will take a decisively historical perspective, taking our start from the views of Plato and Aristotle, and seeing how these views are negotiated in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. Nonetheless, it also will be a scientific inquiry into human personality (i.e., rational inquiry aimed towards the real acquisition of knowledge). Therefore, the course will begin with some of the core elements of Aristotle’s understanding of the constituent elements of a science, as well as the four causes. Then, we will consider Plato and Aristotle’s view on body, the soul and intellect. Then, we will see how their views are negotiated in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. The course will end with political and theological consequences of our philosophical analysis of humanity and with the confusions of modern thought, i.e., as instantiated in the writings of Descartes.
Grading

1. 20% of the grade will be assessed based on three papers, each of which must be 2½ - 5 pages in length. In these writing assignments, students will correctly identify and explain the premises and conclusion of an argument imbedded in a text. Lists of writing topics, as well as deadlines, will be given by the instructor at some point during the course. The paper must be: 1. in 12 point font, 2. in Times New Roman and 3. double-spaced. For each paper, the student must cite the relevant primary text(s) as well as any relevant secondary sources that might be assigned by the professor. **No late papers will be accepted. Any paper not turned in by the designated due date will be graded as an automatic zero (F). Any paper turned in under an incorrect format may be subjected to as great a penalty as that of an automatic zero (F). The lowest paper grade will be dropped.**

2. 20% of the final grade will be assessed based on in class participation. (This goes without saying, but late submissions will not be accepted.)

3. 20% of the final grade will be based on a midterm and final examination. **Unless there is an exceedingly compelling reason or university policy otherwise, there will be no make-up examinations.** If the student makes a higher grade on the final exam, the final exam will count for 15% of the final grade, and the midterm for 5%. Otherwise, they will be weighted equally.

4. 40% of the final grade will be averaged from in-class pop-quizzes. The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped. **No make-ups will be given. Any quiz missed (even if the student attends the class on the day on which the quiz is administered, but is tardy) will be graded as a 0.**

Cheating/Academic Dishonesty:

See pages 9-11 of the UST Student Handbook ([http://www.stthom.edu/Campus_Student_Life/Policies_Procedures/Student_Handbook.aqf](http://www.stthom.edu/Campus_Student_Life/Policies_Procedures/Student_Handbook.aqf)). Cheating, especially plagiarism, will result in punishments as severe as an automatic “F” for the course as well as the student being turned in to the relevant academic authorities.

Communication:
At times during the course the professor may contact the entire class or individuals in the class by e-mail.

Students with Disabilities:
Any student with a documented disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Opportunities for Extra Credit:
There will be none.
**Office Hours:**
Any student who desires to meet with me, but is unable to do so during the stated office hour times, is encouraged to email me or speak with me after class in order to arrange a meeting at an alternative day/time.

**Grading Scale:**

100 to 93: A
92.9 to 90: A-
89.9 to 87: B+
86.9 to 83: B
82.9 to 80: B-
79.9 to 77: C+
76.9 to 73: C
72.9 to 70: C-
69.9 to 67: D+
66.9 to 60: D
Less than 60: F

Pending general class performance, the instructor reserves the right to “curve” any and all graded assignments and/or the final grade.

**Syllabus of Readings**

08/26 [lecture 1]: Syllabus; Preliminary lecture on philosophy and rational anthropology


09/09 [lectures 5-7]: Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II.11-12 and Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* II.16-17 and Aristotle, *Physics* II.3 and II.7; Plato, *Phaedo*
09/16 [lectures 8-10]: Plato, *Phaedo*, *First Alcibiades* 129b-130c, *Phaedrus* 244c-249c, *Republic* VI 490 a-b and *Republic* IX 585b-c and *Republic* X 614b-d

09/23 [lectures 11-13]: Plato review [first paper assigned]; Aristotle, *I De Anima*; Discourse on writing philosophy papers

09/30 [lectures 14-16]: Aristotle, *II De Anima*.

10/07 [lectures 17-19]: Aristotle, *II-III De Anima*.

10/14: Midterm examination; **First Paper Due.**


10/28 [lectures 23-25]: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q.77, aa. 1-3, 5-6, and 8; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 78 (all articles); *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 79 aa. 1-5 and 11.

11/04 [lectures 26-28]: St. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* I, qq. 80 and 81 (all articles); *Summa Theologiae* I, qq. 82-83; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 84, aa. 1-4; **Second Paper Due.**

11/11 [lectures 29-31]: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 84, aa. 6-7 and q. 85, aa. 1-2; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 85, aa. 3-8 and Summa Theologiae I, q. 86, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 87 [third paper assigned]

11/18 [lectures 32-34]: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 88 (all articles); *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 89 (all articles); Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas review

11/25: Thanksgiving break; no class

12/02 [lectures 35-36]: Etienne Gilson, Unity of Philosophical Experience, part II, chapter VI “Cartesian Spiritualism” and “Letter of Dedication to the Sorbonne,” “Preface to the Reader” and “Summary of the Following Six Meditations” from Descartes’ “Meditations on First Philosophy”; Jacques Maritain, “The Immortality of Man”; Last day of class; **Third Paper Due.**